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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2017

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/72/439)*]

72/161. International Day of Sign Languages

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that multilingualism, as a core value of the Organization, contributes to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognizing also that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally, as well as of improving the efficiency, performance and transparency of the Organization,

Reaffirming its resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries, particularly paragraphs 1 to 10 of the annex thereto on the agreed criteria for the proclamation of international years, and paragraphs 13 and 14, in which it is stated that an international day or year should not be proclaimed before the basic arrangements for its organization and financing have been made,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[1]

Recalling also the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[2] in which it is reflected that sign languages are equal to spoken languages, and that States parties to the Convention undertake to recognize, accept and promote the use of sign languages,

Recalling further its resolutions 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, 42/207 C of 11 December 1987, 47/135 of 18 December 1992 and 50/11 of 2 November 1995 and other subsequent resolutions relating to multilingualism, including resolutions 67/292 of 24 July 2013, 68/307 of

[1] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

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10 September 2014, 69/96 A and B of 5 December 2014, 69/250 of 29 December 2014, 69/324 of 11 September 2015, 71/101 A and B of 6 December 2016, 71/262 and 71/263 of 23 December 2016, 71/288 of 24 May 2017, 71/314 of 19 July 2017 and 71/328 of 11 September 2017,

Affirming that ensuring and promoting the full realization of all human rights relevant to matters of language and fundamental freedoms is a critical prerequisite to the full realization of human rights for deaf people,

Aware that sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from spoken languages, alongside which they coexist, and that, when working with deaf communities, the principle of "nothing about us without us" must be considered and integrated,

Recalling that early access to sign language and services in sign language, including quality education available in sign language, is vital to the growth and development of the deaf individual and critical to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the importance of preserving sign languages as part of linguistic and cultural diversity,

1. *Proclaims* 23 September as the International Day of Sign Languages, to be observed each year beginning in 2018, in order to raise awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realization of the human rights of people who are deaf;

2. *Invites* all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other international organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to observe the International Day of Sign Languages in an appropriate manner, in order to raise public awareness of sign languages;

3. *Encourages* Member States to take measures to raise awareness of sign languages throughout society;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system;

5. *Stresses* that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution regarding the International Day of Sign Languages should be met from voluntary contributions.

73rd plenary meeting
19 December 2017